

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

WATER

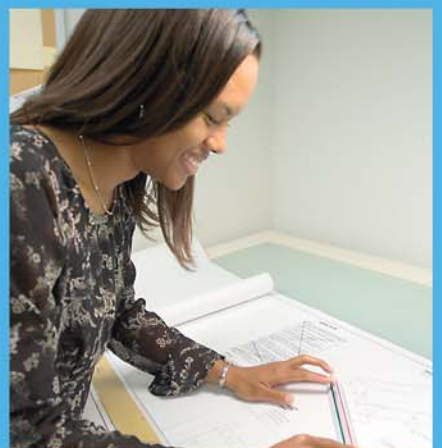
Matters

Summer 2006



GET TO KNOW US!

Stay informed with this quarterly update from the South Florida Water Management District, protector of the region's water resources.



■ **Meet the South Florida Water Management District**
Who we are and what we do

■ **Ecosystem Restoration Action and Progress**
Everglades, Lake Okeechobee, Coastal Estuaries, Kissimmee River

■ **Canals Connect Us**
Hurricane heads-up: Flood control starts in your neighborhood

■ **Get to Know Our Partners**
Working together to protect water resources

INSIDE



FLOOD CONTROL is at the core of our mission with a workforce that operates and maintains 1,800 miles of canals and levees and hundreds of water control structures across central and southern Florida. **OUR EMPLOYEES** are also environmental scientists, engineers, stewards of public lands, water supply planners, outreach professionals, information technology specialists, emergency managers and implementers of ecosystem restoration.

GET to KNOW US



Water defines us, and we dive in head first everyday to manage our area's water needs for you.

OUR JOB IS TO:

- **OPERATE** the primary flood-control system to make it possible for us to live and work safely in our communities.
- **SAFEGUARD** our regional water supplies for people and the environment for today and the future.
- **ENSURE** water quality in the interconnected Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades ecosystem, one of the most diverse in the world.
- **MOVE FORWARD** aggressively with our commitment to restore and protect our natural systems.



We're the South Florida Water Management District, a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to Key West and from Fort Myers to Fort Pierce. A nine-member Governing Board, appointed by the Governor, sets policy and provides overall direction for the agency, which is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. (See members on back page.)

CANALS CONNECT US

Is YOUR neighborhood drainage system ready for hurricane season?

You've probably driven past, or walked along parts of this huge canal system – the largest of its kind in the world – and may not have known it! If you've seen a sign with a friendly alligator along a waterway like the one on the cover, you have seen part of the regional flood-control system that makes it possible for most of us to comfortably and safely live and work in this region. The regional system works in concert with smaller systems, which are managed by communities or local governments such as homeowner associations, cities, counties or water control districts. Each part of this system, including neighborhood lakes, ponds and flowways, has a crucial role to play in avoiding catastrophic flooding while preserving navigation, water supplies and environmental values.



FLOOD CONTROL:
A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
With hurricane and wet season here, now is the time to check things like making sure drainage grates are clear of leaves and debris. A brochure called "Know the Flow" describes how water management systems work and offers you more tips for checking your neighborhood drainage system. Call (800) 432-2045, ext. 2064, for a copy.

KNOW the FLOW





ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Everglades ■ Lake Okeechobee ■ Coastal Estuaries ■ Kissimmee River

From the beautiful lakes in Osceola County to the vast wetlands of the Everglades, natural areas in central and southern Florida are ours to enjoy, protect and, when needed, to restore. But as recently as two decades ago, virtually no environmental restoration was taking place here.

All that has changed – significantly. Today, ecosystem restoration is a vital mission of the South Florida Water Management District. In partnership with federal, state, county and local agencies, the District has completed or started dozens of restoration projects; dozens more are planned. Here are some highlights of our progress:

THE RIVER OF GRASS – ACCELERATED RESTORATION ACTION

America's Everglades – the famed River of Grass – is the focus of the \$8 billion federal-state restoration partnership known as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Authorized by Congress in 2000, CERP projects are found throughout central and southern Florida, reflecting the interconnection of the entire Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades watershed. "Getting the water right" is the primary goal of CERP. This means improving the volume, timing and quality of water flow, giving the wetland ecosystem what it needs most for recovery. Almost 70 different projects will be implemented over CERP's 30-year timeframe.

But for the state of Florida and others concerned for the environment, 30 years is not fast enough. To realize restoration benefits as soon as possible, the District, in partnership with the state, has fast-tracked eight key projects, nicknamed *Acceler8*. These projects include reservoirs, stormwater treatment areas and conveyance canals that will provide significant progress toward getting the water right. They are located throughout the region, from Martin and Hendry counties to Collier and Miami-Dade.

THE LAKE AND TWO ESTUARIES – PROJECTS FAST-TRACKED

The state's bold and aggressive Lake Okeechobee and Estuary Recovery (LOER) plan, launched in October 2005, addresses the complex issues of Lake Okeechobee management and the impact of flood-control lake releases to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee coastal estuaries. LOER includes District-led fast-track construction of a storage reservoir and stormwater treatment wetlands to reduce pollutants entering our protected water bodies by 2009. These projects, along with other multi-agency components, will improve water quality and quantity, both essential to the health of these waterways.

WADING BIRDS RETURN TO THE KISSIMMEE

Restoration of the Kissimmee River has improved a vast, natural area north of Lake Okeechobee. The 103-mile Kissimmee once meandered across a 1-2 mile floodplain until the 1960s when it was "straightened" and channelized into the C-38 canal for flood-control purposes. From 1999-2001, the District worked diligently with its federal partner, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to restore about 15 miles of the historic, meandering river channel.

As a result, the Kissimmee has been receiving a life-giving sheetflow of water that is healing the floodplain-dependent ecosystem. Wading birds have returned in abundance to the restored area. Native plants are now thriving, and a greater percentage of fish are in river channels. The next phase of this four-part restoration program will begin later this year.

A WINNING COMBINATION – BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Ecosystem restoration may not have a long history in Florida, but it clearly has a bright future. Together with our many partners at all levels of government – and your support – we are making it a successful reality.



Although launched less than two years ago, Acceler8 is quickly proving true to its name, with accelerated planning, design and construction of vital Everglades restoration projects. Groundbreakings have been celebrated already for three expanded stormwater treatment areas and for test cells at three reservoir sites, including the massive C-43 (Caloosabatchee River) West Reservoir project pictured here. This project will help improve water conditions in the Caloosabatchee River and Estuary.

ACTION & PROGRESS

GET TO KNOW OUR PARTNERS

More than 40 agencies at all levels of government – including the South Florida Water Management District – and many other stakeholders are working together to protect our shared water resources, provide flood control and restore the greater Everglades ecosystem. Our primary partners include:

FEDERAL

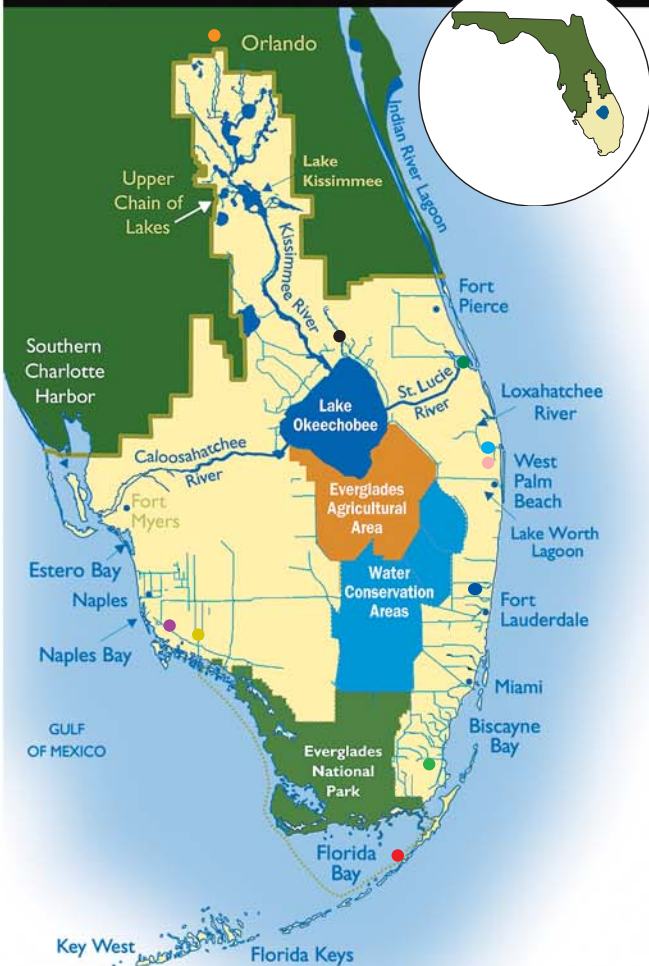
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (877) 232-2235
- U.S. Department of the Interior (202) 208-3100
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (202) 272-0167

STATE

- South Florida Water Management District (see map at left)
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection (850) 245-2118
- Florida Department of Community Affairs (850) 488-8466
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (850) 488-4676
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services .. (850) 488-3731

LOCAL

The South Florida Water Management District partners with local city and county governments, including water utility departments, across our 16-county jurisdiction to implement ecosystem protection and restoration, enhance flood protection and protect water supplies. Check your telephone directory for a list of your local city or county offices, or contact your nearest Service Center for assistance



Service Centers: Your Direct Link

The South Florida Water Management District's nine Service Centers are the critical links between the regional agency – headquartered in West Palm Beach – and the local communities we serve throughout our 16-county jurisdiction highlighted in yellow on the map.

HEADQUARTERS

- West Palm Beach
(561) 686-8800 or (800) 432-2045 (Florida Only)

SERVICE CENTERS

- Big Cypress Basin/Naples
(239) 597-1505
- Broward
(954) 713-3200
- Florida Keys (Plantation Key)
(305) 853-3219 or (800) 464-5067
- Lower West Coast (office in Fort Myers)
(239) 338-2929 or (800) 248-1201
- Martin/St. Lucie
(772) 223-2600 or (800) 250-4100
- Miami-Dade
(305) 377-7274 or (800) 250-4300
- Okeechobee
(863) 462-5260 or (800) 250-4200
- Orlando
(407) 858-6100 or (800) 250-4250
- Palm Beach County
(561) 682-2283



IF FLOODING OCCURS, WHO SHOULD I CALL?

Contact your neighborhood or local drainage district first

In most cases outside of an emergency, localized flooding is the responsibility of the local county/municipality, secondary drainage districts, and/or neighborhood property-homeowner associations. While they should always be your first contacts, the South Florida Water Management District works with and assists whenever possible. Complete flood prevention is not possible in central and southern Florida, especially given the potential for excessive rainfall associated with a tropical storm or hurricane. The regional system of canals and structures is designed to help reduce flooding levels and help shorten the duration of standing flood waters.

Meet us face-to-face

Did you know the South Florida Water Management District manages and protects the water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply? Want to hear more? It would be our pleasure to meet with your organization to give a presentation and answer your questions. If interested, please contact Doris Urban at (800) 432-2045 or (561) 686-8800, ext. 6202.

YOUR GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

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